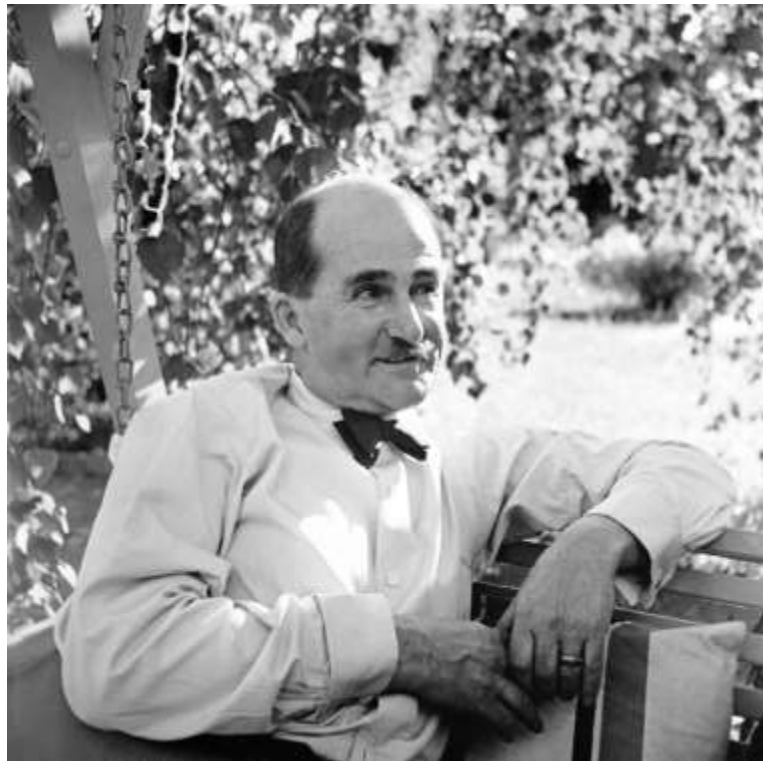


Agathon Carlovich Fabergé (1876-1951)





FINLANDIA 88
HELSINKI 1.-12.6.1988



The Dispersal of Agathon Fabergé's Great Collections

Jeffrey Stone

FROM 1 TO 12 JUNE 1988 THE PHILATELIC FRATERNITY IN FINLAND hosted FINLANDIA 88, an international exhibition under FIP patronage and the second such event to be organised in Finland. The exhibition was held during the 350th anniversary year of the founding of Posts and Telecommunications of Finland. The founding date of 6 September was the preferred date for the issue of commemorative stamps and for separate celebrations, although P & T did mount a substantial jubilee exhibition within FINLANDIA 88 and they also published a history of the Finnish posts. A different theme or focus was therefore required for FINLANDIA 88 and the Secretary General of the Operative Group suggested Agathon Fabergé, 1876-1951, (Fig. 1) who had once assembled what was probably the greatest-ever collection of classic Finland. Miniature sheets, postal stationery cards, franking labels and a booklet were issued successively from 1985 to promote the event, culminating just one month prior to the opening in an exhibition booklet incorporating an entrance ticket. The 5mk stamp and two labels in that booklet depicted Agathon Fabergé and some of the philatelic rarities from his collections. Some Fabergé jewellery was on display at the exhibition and the Court of Honour included choice items from the Zemstvo collection of Oleg Fabergé, Agathon's son.



Figure 1. Agathon Fabergé

The Dispersal of the Fabergé Collections; Two Published Accounts

The multi-lingual FINLANDIA 88 exhibition catalogue included an article by Kurt K. Karlsson entitled "Agathon Fabergé, Philatelist" (Ref. 1) which was published with the approval of Oleg Fabergé (Ref. 2). The English-language version quoted below was translated from the original Swedish text, which is an abbreviated version of a three-part article, written in 1969 and published in 1970 (Ref. 3). The author relates the origins of Fabergé's stamp collections, how he fled Russia for Finland in 1927 (Ref. 4) and how friends persuaded him to exhibit at the stamp exhibition in Helsinki in 1928. This can be confirmed from the exhibition catalogue which details his exhibit under eleven headings; Finland rarities, postal stationery and reprints; Russia No. 1, postmarks, proofs, postal stationery and rarities; Russian Levant; Poland No. 1 and postal stationery. A photograph of his entire display of 80 sheets, together with three close-up photographs, appeared in the concurrent issue of the journal Suomen Postimerkkilehti (Ref. 5). The photograph shows that his exhibit included some of the great rarities which came to be associated with Fabergé, such as his Finland 1856 10 kopek rose tête-bêche block of six and the famous cover to Germany with four pairs of the 5 kopek blue of 1856.

Karlsson goes on to say that Fabergé was talked into preparing a more extensive exhibit of Finland, Russia and its border regions for the WIPA exhibition in 1933. The account continues:

"The material exhibited by Fabergé created a world sensation in philatelic circles, which brought both sincere well-wishers and charlatans. For a long time Agathon Fabergé had wished that his collections would one day belong to some big museum. Some gentlemen whose intentions may not have been completely above board convinced Fabergé that the British Museum would be the right place to house the collections. Fabergé was of a trusting disposition, and in his experience from old Russia clients always kept their word. He now agreed to send all



Portrait of a fine philatelist

- Who was Agathon Fabergé? A brief biography
- His stamp collections
- His travels and exhibitions
- His philatelic research
- The disposal of his collections

1. Who was Agathon Fabergé?



Second son of Peter Carl Fabergé (1846-1920), educated in the German Lutheran community of St Petersburg



The House of Fabergé , 24 Bolshaya Morskaya, St Petersburg, c.1905

Agathon joined the family firm about 1896, trained in gem stones.



Agathon's former country house, Levashovo, now in a ruinous state



Agathon's study at Levashovo



Fabergé employed many highly skilled craftsmen

The outbreak of war in 1914 was the beginning of the end of the Fabergé business in Russia. In 1915, the workshops began to produce war supplies. In 1918, the House of Fabergé was closed by the Bolsheviks although Agathon had left the firm in 1916 when he fell out with his father.

Agathon at his summer house in Finland after his escape from Russia in 1927.



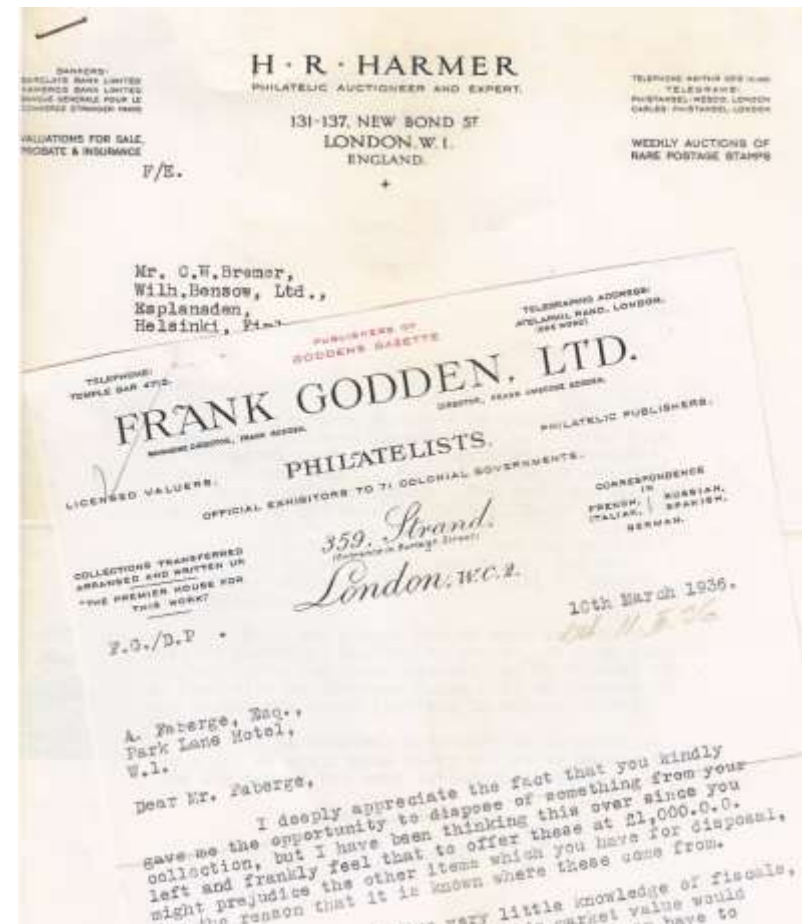


The Fabergé grave in Helsinki

correspondence with stamp dealers
and auction houses

With London dealers and auction houses

With Heinrich Köhler, Berlin



Manuscript notes

SEMSTWO

Marken welche bloss in einem einzigen Exemplar existieren sind Unikate und ebenso selten wie z.Bsp. #9 von British Guiana 1 cent rot welche bekanntlich mit £ 10,000.- verkauft wurde, daher müssen solche mit RRRRR bezeichnet ^{HERDEN} mindestens mit RMK. 20.000.- bewertet werden, also bloss 10% vom eigentlichen Wert solcher Marken

A 24 A W ^{Konsul (Dänisch)} ^{BRUNN} ^{Norwegen I}

137x30 ^{am 31.12.1932 hat mir} ^{die Postverwaltung} ^{in Stockholm} ^{2000 Kronen} ^{für die 39 Block 10.000 Kronen}

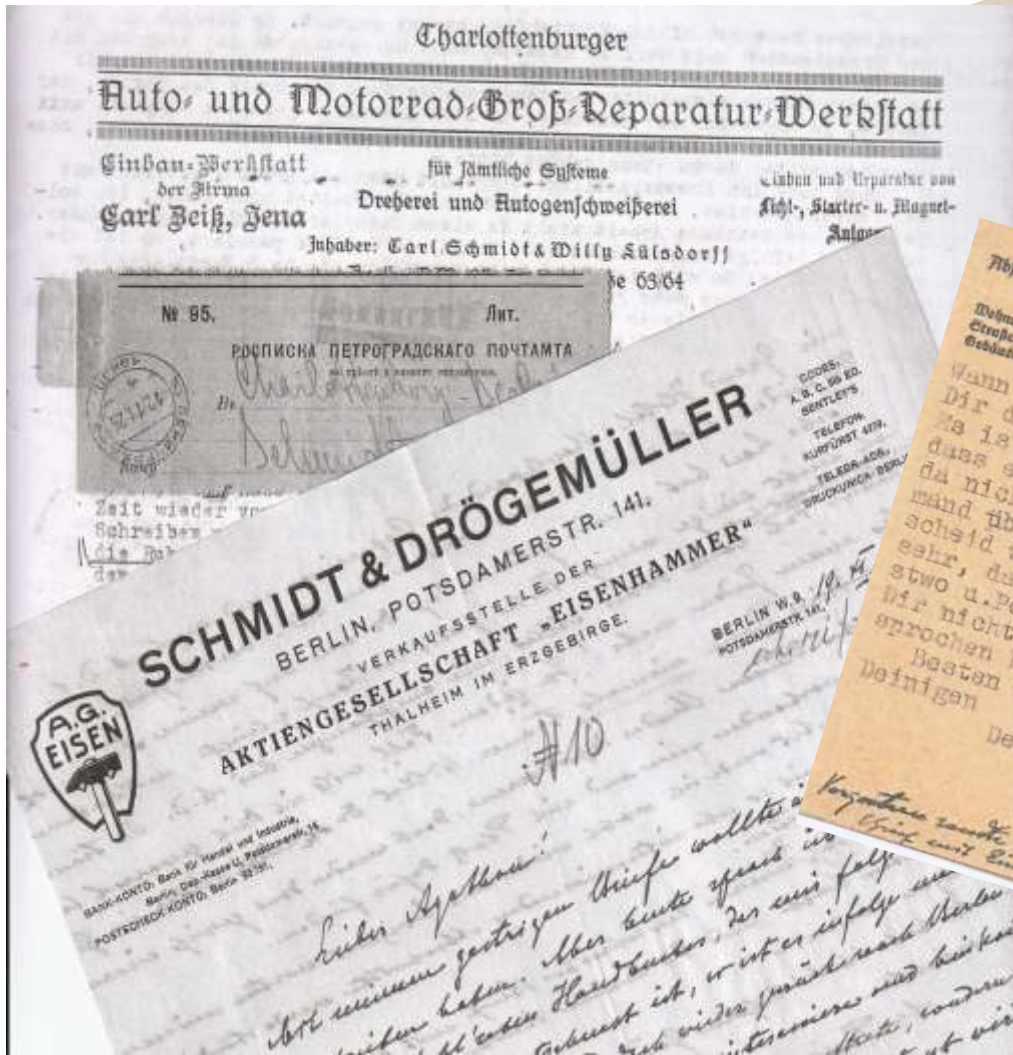
266.S. Newbury Chicago Brasil I

30. ^{8 em} ^{2 6} ⁴¹ ⁷ ⁵

60. ^{173 em} ^(7*)

90

Correspondence with Carl Schmidt 1925-1932



Agathon Fabergé: the young collector



India used in Zanzibar



Handbook of Russian Zemstvos

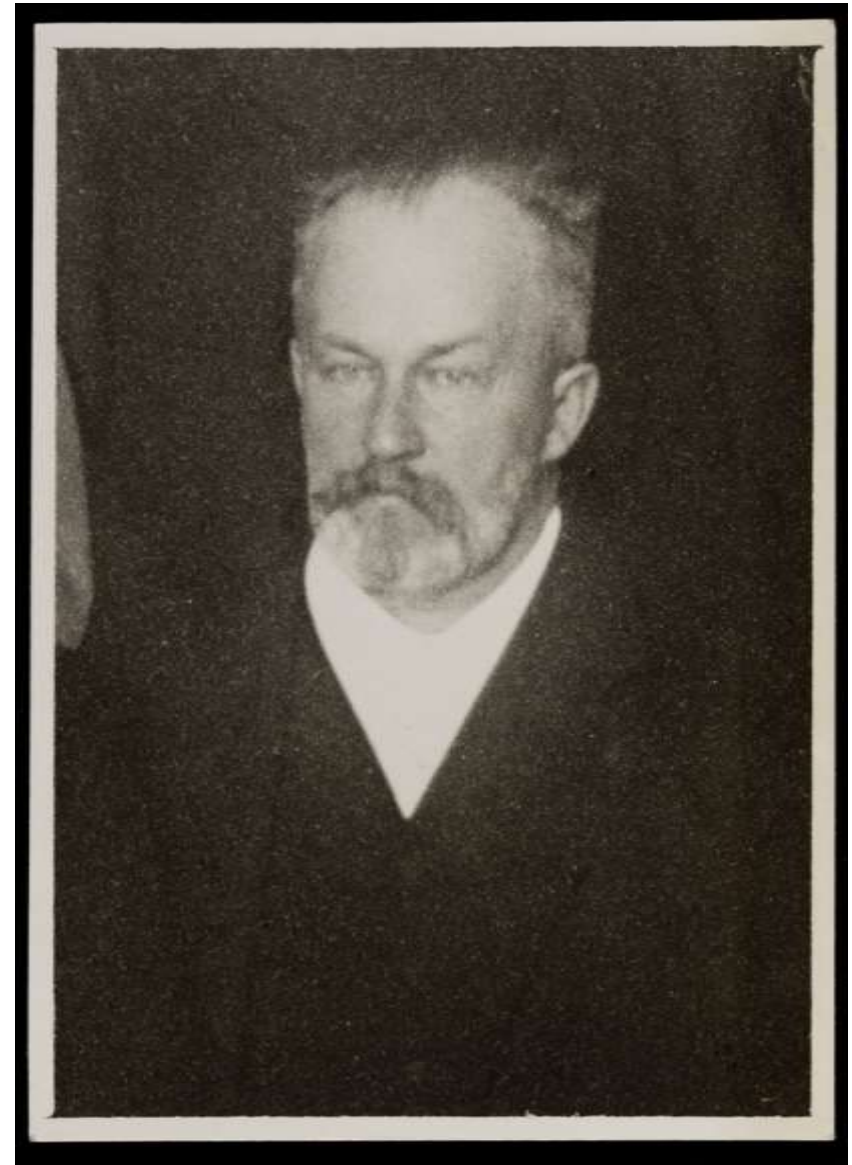


Freidrich Breitfuss 1851-1911

*Friedrich Breitfuss.
St. Petersburg
Der allgrösste Kenner
der Philatelie
aller Zeiten.*

Meinem Freund Wladimir v. Rachmanoff.

*z. Zeit Helsingfors 8. 1. 54.
von Agathon Fabergé.*



rd-23 VI 11 F. Breitfuss

rd- 23 VI 11 F.Breitfuss

Fabergé's
pencil notes



The Fabergé pencil marks



Pencil notes on rare stamps but also on very common stamps

Collecting 1900-1914: buying from dealers and auctions around Europe



ex-Stock, Germany



ex-Köhler,
Germany



ex -Kosack, Germany



ex-Ruben, Copenhagen



ex-Houtzamer, London

Collecting 1900-1914: local contacts



ex-Mertens samlung 1



ex-Breitfuss



ex-Mertens samlung 2

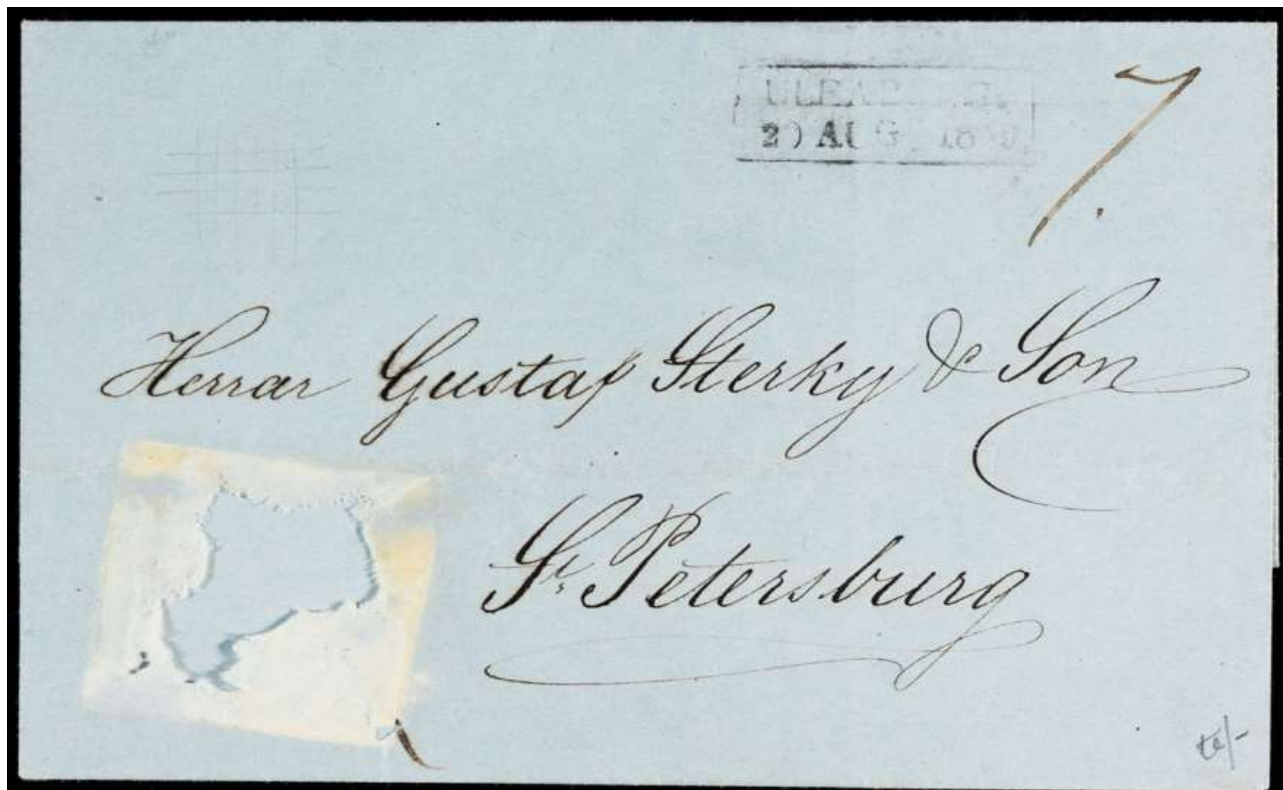


ex-Kirchner

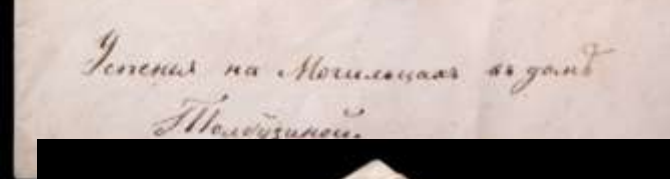
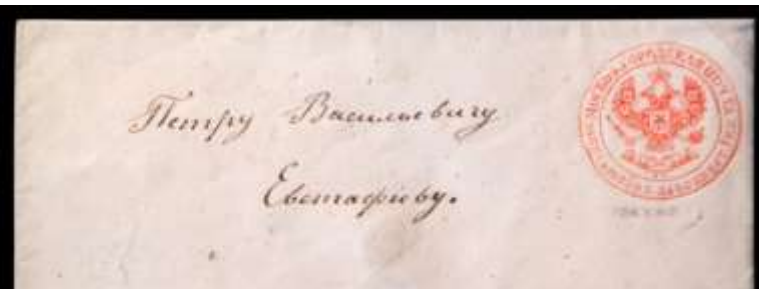


ex-Lentz

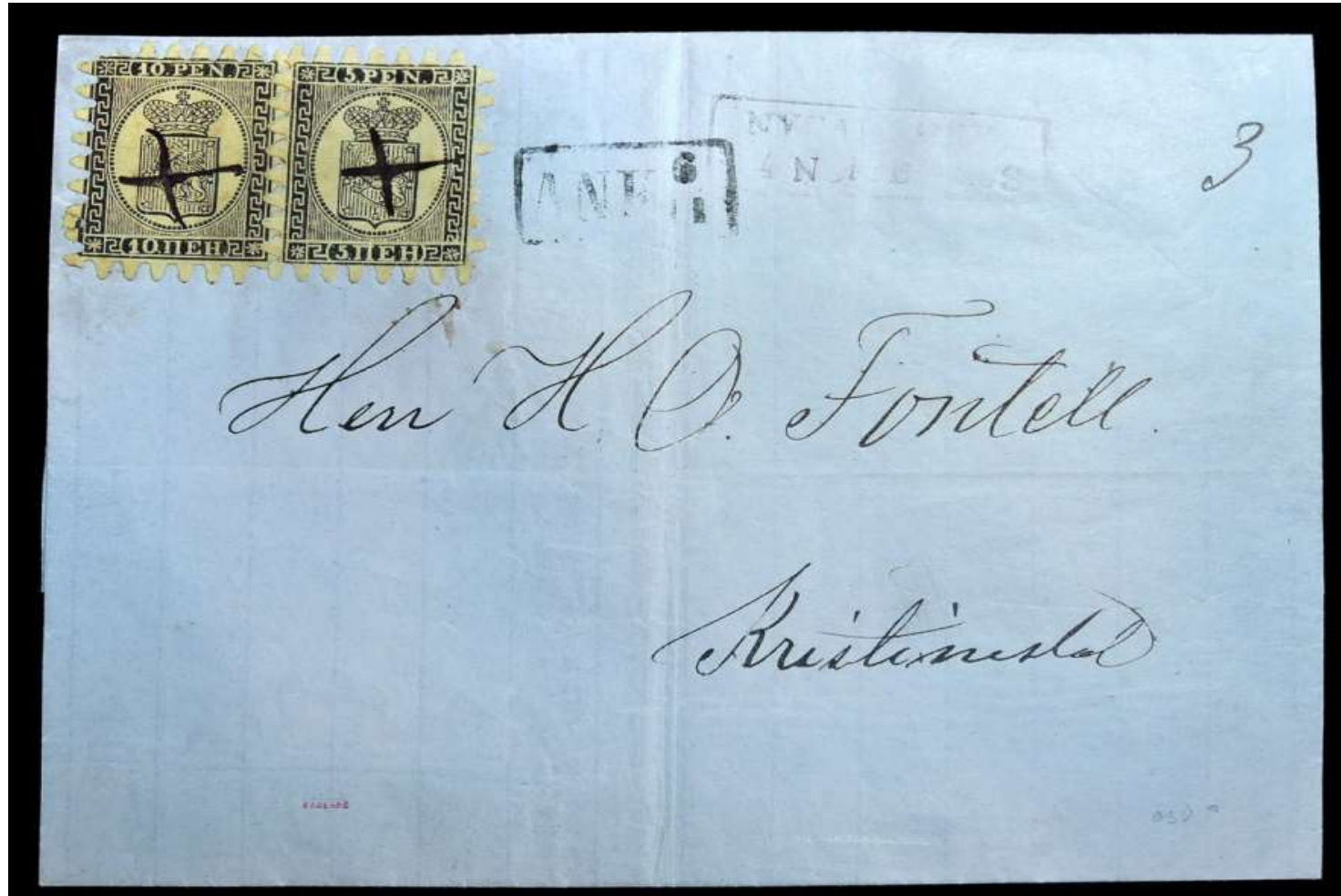
The Gustaf
Sterky archive



Moscow city mail ..

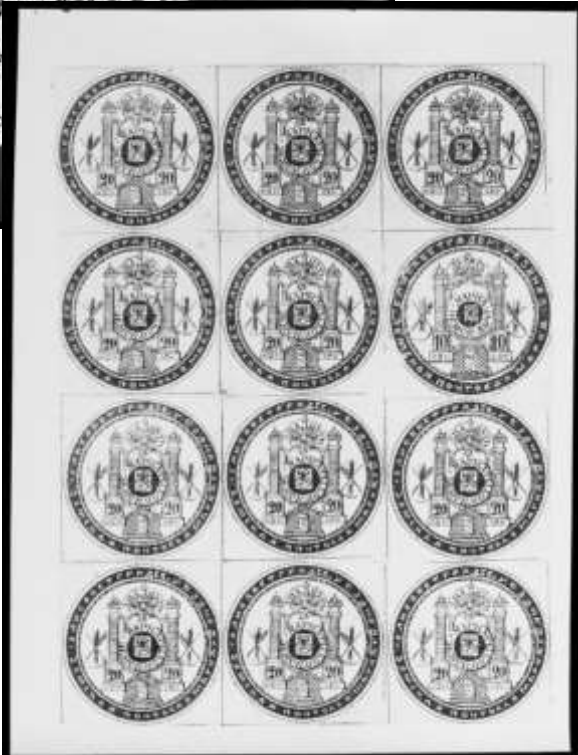
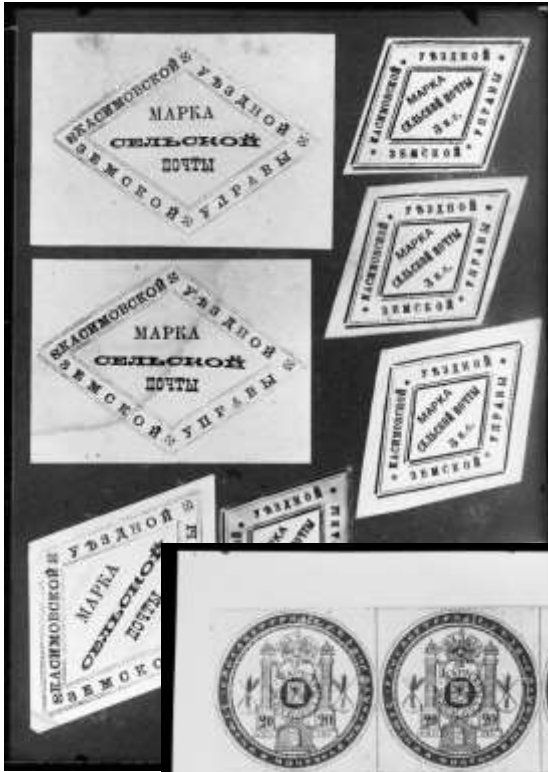


1866 5p cliché error on cover



Perhaps the greatest rarity in Finnish philately

Fabergé and Zemstvos



Collecting in Russia: 1922-1927



bought 26.X.27



bought 27.V.1924



bought VI.27

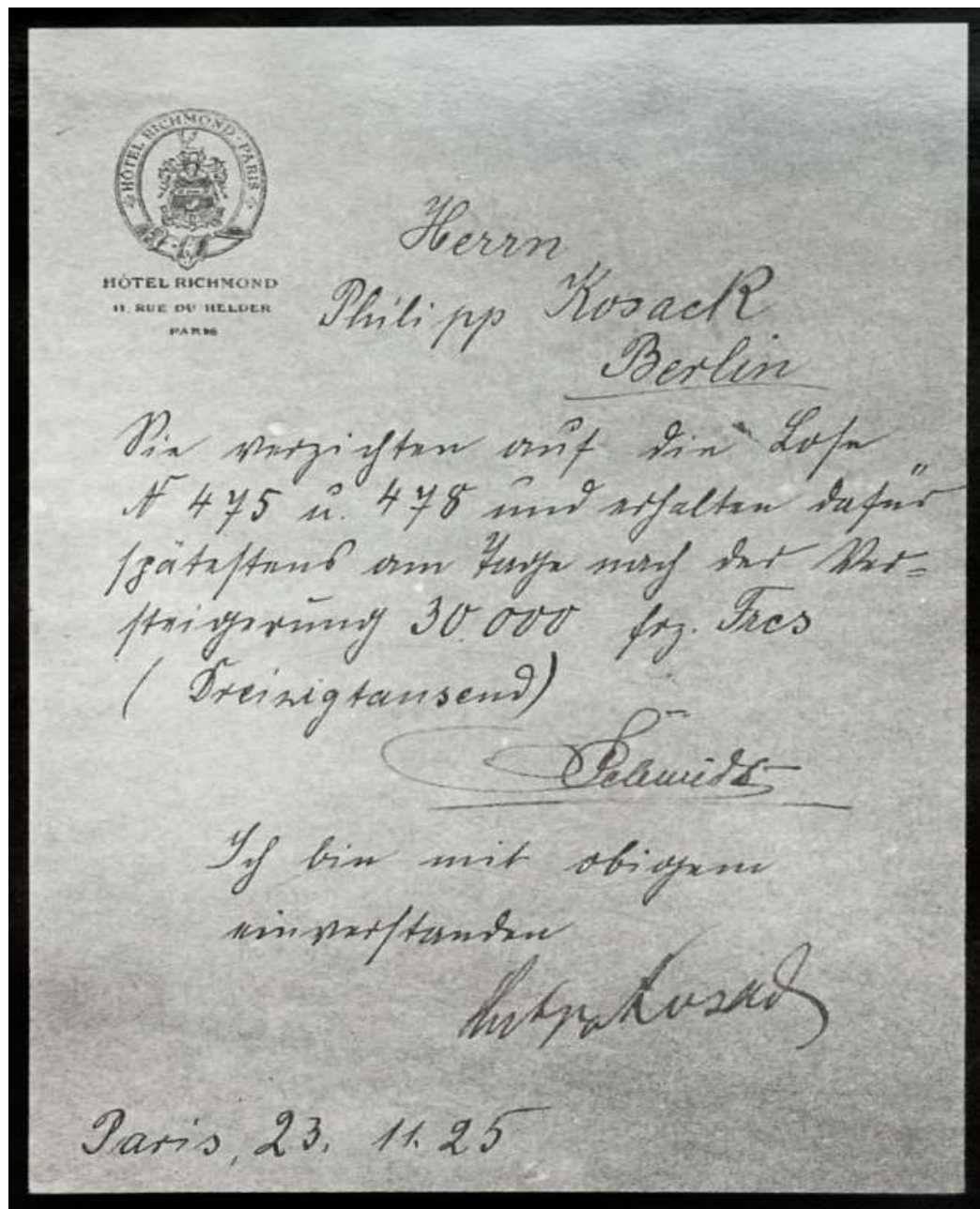


bought 6.IX.24

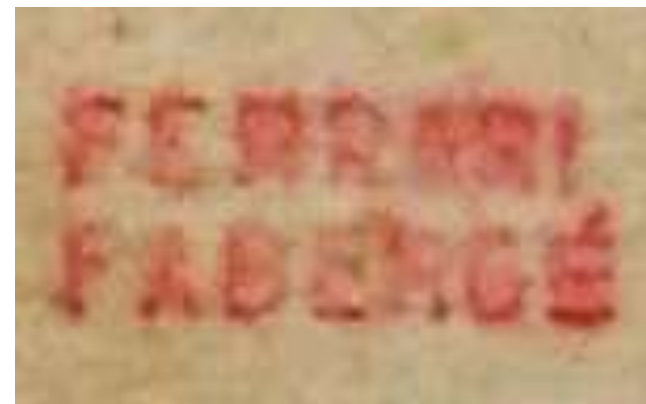


bought 5.XII.22

The Ferrari Zemstvo agreement, signed Kosack & Schmidt



Red 'FERRARI/FABERGÉ' mark



Some of the ex-Ferrari Zemstvos





The house bought by Fabergé in Helsinki in 1928

Before moving in, he employed architect Georg Nummelin to make alterations to the property.